

THE ARGUS.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1891.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY has some good ideas. She believes girls should study law so they can conduct their own divorce suits after marriage.

THE KANSAS farmer has a hard time. No sooner had he succeeded in killing off Ingalis than the chinch bug and the Hessian fly put in an appearance and now his time is taken up fighting these pests.

GERMANY has officially accepted the invitation of the United States to take part in the world's fair, and will at once grant an appropriation and appoint an imperial commission to arrange and supervise the exhibit.

THEODORE TILTON is living in Paris, where he is writing articles on the syndicate system to earn subsistence and writing poems to satisfy and gratify himself. His articles go, but his poems are to be published only after death. This may be a very sensible conclusion on Tilton's part.

WOULD-BE Minister Blair declares that he does not care a snap of his fingers whether he goes to China or not. This, however, is not the state of mind of his fellow-countrymen. They want him to go, if not to China, then to Japan, or to any other country on the other side of the world.

A St. JOSEPH (Mo.) firm recently ordered through a drummer five gross of pins. The order was sent to the wholesale house, by mistake, for five great gross of pins, and now there are nearly eight hundred pounds of pins, or 103,000 papers, at the depot in St. Joe waiting a settlement of the matter.

JAMES KNOX POLK was the eleventh president of the United States, defeating Henry Clay in 1844. His home in the city of Nashville and at present occupied by his aged widow, has been advertised for sale for city taxes, amounting to \$1,900. That billion dollar congress ought to have rendered such an indignity impossible.

"U. O. D." are the mystic initials under which a new society is announced having for its object the proscription of Roman Catholics in all the relations of life. "U. O. D." must mean United Order of Damfools.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat, (Rep.)

Well, Mr. Democrat, there is quite a branch of the new order in Rock Island and if reports are true, the membership consists mainly of republicans.

A CLOSED carriage dashed up to the polling place in a Kansas city and a well dressed matron rather timidly stepped out. Seeing a young man of her acquaintance without the rail, she called him to her and placed her ballot, carefully prepared, in his hand, with a request that he "put it in for me, please." Before the substitute could explain matters she was gone, and the ballot, of course, was not cast.

T. L. JAMES, of New York, is a man of many exs. He is an ex-editor, ex-inspector, ex-deputy collector, ex-postmaster and ex-postmaster general. He is not yet ex-bank president, says an exchange. But he is likely at any time to be so and at the same time both extinguished and extinct. That will be about the time of his permanent exit from the stage of life.

WHAT with its tariff laws and other eccentricities the United States government is not a comfortable party to a contract, says the New York World. A contractor named McGill agreed to import certain Scotch enamelled brick for the congressional library. They were to be free of duty. Some of the bricks, however, were found to be defective and were rejected, and now the treasury has compelled the unfortunate contractor to pay 45 per cent. duty on these defective bricks. The present administration seems to find great pleasure in ridiculing any one who is wicked enough to import anything, even at its own instigation.

THE foreigner, reading descriptions of the presidential train and the fittings of the Palace hotel in San Francisco while the presidential party was domiciled therein, would naturally be inclined to scoff somewhat at American boasts of "republican simplicity," says the New York World. No monarch of civilized Europe travels in such state or is received with such pomp and ceremony. Such regal splendor is reserved for some barbarian shah or maharajan, who holds half his subjects in slavery. In the present case the simile is fitting, for our president is the choice of the protected barons and railway monopolists, who hold the people with a tighter grasp than ever feudal lord held his vassals. Just now they are providing the splendor; later the people must foot the bills.

The White Colonel.

By ALFRED BALCH.

CHAPTER III.



El Coronel Blanco.

In the court martial which was held two days after, in the absence of the coward, Rafael Cordoba was condemned to be degraded from his rank and shot for desertion in the face of the enemy. There are no braver nor more gallant men on earth than the Colombians, and it was with an almost sickening feeling of repulsion that men who had known and loved his father voted with tears a shameful death for that father's son. But they never executed the sentence, for Rafael Cordoba was not seen again. After the battle of Pamplona, on the 1st of April of the following year, the last of the war, Col. Sanchez returned to Cali. His father met him some miles away. The shameful story had preceded him, and he heard that Senor Cordoba was dead, dead of a broken heart. His father seemed to Pepe to be many years older, and strong man as Col. Sanchez was he almost feared to ask after Elodia. When at last he mentioned her name Senor Sanchez broke down.

"She goes about like a ghost, my son. At first she would not believe the story. None of us believed it. How could we? But then the official bulletin came, and I saw it was true. It nearly killed me."

"It has nearly killed me, my father," broke in Pepe's deep voice.

"Then Senora Cordoba took to her bed and sent for the Padre Gomez. He cried like a child as he came from her. She never got up, and we buried her. Elodia stormed about the house, declaring it was a conspiracy. She went to Senora Cordoba and never left her while she lived. Since then she has been quiet, but, oh! Pepe, she is so white and thin. It will make you cry to see her eyes," and the fond old man sobbed as he bent his head and murmured a prayer for his little girl.

Pepe's stern face grew sterner as they rode along in silence. When they reached the house he went in, and his sister met him at the head of the stairs. He saw her, and a great wave of pity swept over him as he took her in his arms and kissed her gently. His mother would have spoken, but Pepe checked her by a look. Elodia busied herself with caring for his comfort, going about with a face that wrung the brother's heart. Neither then nor afterward did she ever speak of Rafael, but when, some time in the spring of '42, she declared her intention of becoming a sister of charity, and Pepe tried to dissuade her, she looked at him and said with trembling lips:

"Dost think, my brother, there is any consolation for me except from God?" And Pepe was silent.

So far as may be known, during the war in Mexico between Maximilian and Juarez, "El Coronel Blanco"—The White Colonel—first made his appearance. There are rumors concerning him during the various revolutions in the Central and South American countries prior to this time; but there is nothing certain about them that I have ever been able to learn. Sure it is that he joined the forces under Juarez, and that he cared for neither rank nor pay. His one request was to be permitted to take part in the fighting and to be placed where there was the greatest danger. He was a man of average height, thin and worn, with deep sunken eyes, in which was an expression of intense sorrow.

He called himself Jose Garcia, but was much more often addressed as "Senor Blanco," the name given to him by the soldiers, who were struck by the snowy whiteness of his hair and beard. He was intensely religious, and many spoke of him with bated breath as of a man under a vow. But he was a thorough soldier, there could be no doubt of that, not only in his drill, but in his care for the welfare of his men, in his knowledge of what was needed for their health, in his sympathy with them and his willingness to spend any amount of time looking after them. And in return his men worshiped him. They would follow him anywhere, confident that he would lead them to victory. Twice during the war the desperate charges of his regiment turned the tide of battle. Juarez, the greatest leader in Mexican history, learned to lean on the white haired, silent man as a sure support; but when the war was over and Maximilian was dead, the White Colonel refused all the brilliant offers made to him, declined the wealth, the rank, the honors which Juarez would have heaped on him, and disappeared.

The men who banded together and sought to free Cuba from the rule of Spain had no more skillful volunteer than the thin, white haired man with the sorrowful eyes who appeared so suddenly among them. To his strategy and ability a goodly proportion of their power to keep up the long struggle was due, and he risked his life as freely as the

youngest patriot there. His indeed seemed to be a charmed life; death or disease stalked by and touched him not. When the Cuban struggle failed, once more he disappeared, but came to the front again in the war between Peru and Chili, fighting then on the side of the Peruvians when their country was invaded. That war ended he was lost sight of until the Gaitan revolution in Colombia in 1884 and 1885. It is probable that he took part in some of the attempted rebellions against Barrios in Guatemala, but I have no information of this kind. No one knows nor in all probability will any one ever know where Senor Garcia lived between the wars in which he served or what he did to support himself. He simply appeared when there was work for him and disappeared when it was done.

It does not need that I should attempt here to unravel the political snarl out of which grew the revolution led by Gaitan. It is sufficient for my story that when Gen. Matens marched down the valley of the Magdalena to meet Gen. Reyes from the coast one of the regiments of "Loyal Canca," was under the command of Col. Jose Maria Sanchez. Col. Sanchez—a grim, grizzled veteran—was wonderfully altered since the days when he and Rafael Cordoba passed Calamar on their way home from Paris. And yet as he walked that first evening along the bank behind the line of sandbags protecting the troops which filled the little town from the bullets of the Gaitaneros on the island across the river, and listened to the bugles as they rang out the soft, sweet music of the "Buenas Noches"—"good night"—call, his thoughts went back for over forty years. The sentries, with their steady march up and down their posts; the great guns, not yet in position, but lying ready for the carriages; the line of sandbags; the dying fires of the men; the very houses, which stood ghost like under the pall of the faint, vanished away.

He saw in memory on the bank before him the spectral figures of two young men walking side by side, the arm of one thrown affectionately around the shoulders of the other. He seemed to hear a gay, fresh young voice, and he could almost distinguish the words of hope, of confidence in a brilliant future, of love for home and country.

He took his seat on a sandbag and mechanically took from his satchel a gold "flint and steel," with which he lighted a cigar. He remembered, as he looked at it with its yellow case for the tape, the day Rafael had bought it for him when they were in Paris, when he had laughingly promised to keep it all his life. He remembered, too, how he had locked it away with bitter thoughts in his heart, and then twenty years afterward, when time had mercifully softened the grief and shame, had found it and once more put it in his pocket. He remembered how his father, before he died, had broken the silence and sent his love to Rafael if Pepe ever met him. He thought of that good old man's sorrow and of his sweet sister's broken life. He thought, too, of his friend, for Col. Sanchez was now able to think of him as a friend, and he wondered what had become of him. Was he still alive, and where? What a pitiful story it all was! He had long ago made up his mind that Rafael's desertion had been the result of some overmastering panic which its victim had been utterly unable to conquer; but even then, the pity of it, the pity of it!

A figure of an old man with white hair, wearing an officer's sword, stepped out of the shadow and halted. "Col. Sanchez?"

The colonel looked up and responded briefly.

"Pardon me, colonel," said the stranger quietly; "but I am anxious to serve with your regiment as a volunteer. I have applied to Gen. Reyes and I have his permission, provided I can obtain yours. My name is Jose Garcia."

"Jose Garcia?" repeated Col. Sanchez slowly.

"Yes. Possibly you may have heard of the name by which I am called, 'The White Colonel?'"

"The White Colonel?" repeated Col. Sanchez, springing to his feet. "Are you?"

Senor Garcia bowed.

"But, senor, I cannot allow one so distinguished, so well known, to serve under me. It is I that should be glad to obey you."

"No, colonel, pardon me. Gen. Matens and Gen. Reyes have been most kind, and each has offered me a staff position. But I would prefer greatly to serve with your regiment if I may."

"Of course. The honor you do me is too great for me to refuse, although I cannot think to what I am indebted for it. The captain of one of my companies is sick, and if you will condescend to accept—"

"The very thing of all others I would like," broke in Senor Garcia eagerly. "May I report in the morning?"

"Certainly. In the mean time may I let offer you a cigar?"

Senor Garcia took the cigar, but when he attempted to strike a light with the flint and steel his companion extended to him his hands shook badly, and Col. Sanchez was forced to offer his lighted cigar to him. The two men then saluted, and Senor Garcia walked away.

Col. Sanchez walked up and down, uneasily conscious of something, he knew not what, but the vision which had filled his mind did not come back. On the contrary, he felt irritable with-

out knowing why, and finally he, too, sought his quarters. The next morning at daybreak he found Senor Garcia waiting, and before an hour had passed had installed him at the head of his new company. To their charge was given the great cannon, the "Cabo Junin," which had been brought from Carthage, and Col. Sanchez found himself admiring the skill with which Capt. Garcia superintended the work of placing it in position on the bastion. He found other things to admire before long in the care which "The White Colonel"—for the old name was revived almost at once—showed for the comfort of his men. When the gun was mounted the shots told well on the camp behind the fringe of trees bordering the island across the river.

CHAPTER IV.



The sister sank on her knees beside the bed.

The time at Calamar was a weary time. The Gaitaneros lay sullenly in their intrenchments, and the government troops had no steamers with which to attack them, so there was little fighting except at long range. Gen. Matens was sick with the fever, and the command practically devolved on Gen. Reyes, his chief of staff. Reyes was tireless in his work, and he had the troops well in hand; but for the time there was nothing to do but wait until boats could be secured. Sickness broke out and the gallant Briceno died. Some sisters of charity came from Carthage to nurse the sick who were sent to Santa Lucia, the little village on the Dique, and so the routine of life in camp went on, with a skirmish or two to break the monotony. Col. Sanchez heard his sister was at Santa Lucia with others of the blessed order, and he was away for two days. They had not met then for over twenty years.

It was in August, '85, that one of these skirmishes, a little more vigorous than those which had gone before, took place. The White Colonel was working the cannon under his charge, and the gun was speaking loudly and to the purpose. Just as the last shots were fired a bullet struck him in the shoulder, breaking the bone badly. When it hit him he started, but did not fall, and it was Capt. Rodriguez—he of the laughing bugle—who noticed the wound first. At his solicitation the wounded man consented to leave the gun and to walk to his own quarters, and it was a short time before the surgeon-in-chief, Gen. Martinez, was at work with him. At first all went well enough, and to the many visitors who came to ask after the distinguished soldier word was given that he was getting along all right.

Col. Sanchez came back, but, stirred by he scarcely knew what feeling, insisted on going with the White Colonel when the patient was ordered to Santa Lucia. They carried him there on a stretcher, making the trip on one of the two small steamers which plying up and down the Dique maintained communication between Calamar and its base of supplies, Carthage. The run to the little village, now a hospital, was sufficiently pleasant, nor did the wounded man, as he lay on his cot placed on the forward deck, seem to feel much pain. Col. Sanchez sat near him, but neither cared to talk, and the well man read while the sick man looked out on the low, wide stretching country or glanced at his companion. Across Col. Sanchez's nose there rested a pair of spectacles, and Capt. Garcia smiled in some what melancholy fashion when he noticed them.

"Colonel," he said once, "let me have your flint and steel. I like to feel it in my hand," and Pepe, marveling greatly, handed it to him. Landing at Santa Lucia, the wounded man was carried up to one of the houses, where he soon went to sleep. In the early morning, however, he had a slight chill, and when the surgeon heard of it he looked grave. This was followed by a high fever, but toward evening the patient became much better. He questioned Col. Sanchez sharply about the symptoms, and when he found out what they were he sent for the surgeon, and being alone with him asked him plainly whether blood poisoning had not set in. The medical man hesitated.

"Do not be alarmed to tell me. I have seen many men die from wounds. It is over forty years that I went to my first war," he said with a quiet smile.

"Well, colonel, should there be a return of the chill, followed by the fever"—began the surgeon.

"With delirium and a partial recovery—yes, I know. But I will be sure to have my senses to-morrow."

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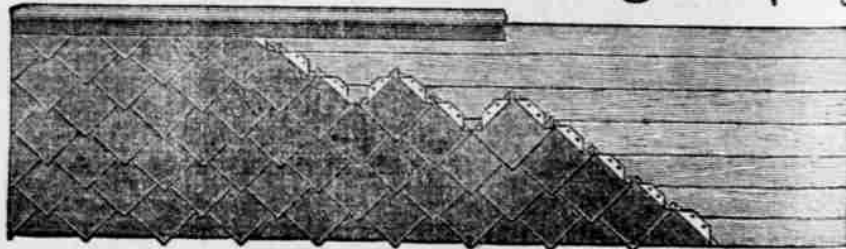
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